IN THE DRAWINGS:

By separate letter to the draftsperson, corrected drawings are submitted. More specifically, Figure 6 is revised to identify reference numeral 22′ and Figure 11 is revised to identify the decoupling element as 2″. These corrections respond to objections (b) and (e) and page 3 of the Office Action

In response to the objections (a, c, and d), the specification has been revised. In particular, the ring 2a of Figure 2b has been inserted into the specification and reference to the central core numeral 1 has been deleted. Reference to ring 2′ for Figure 6 has also been added to the description.

By the changes to the drawings and specification, each of the objections listed on page 3 has been addressed and the objections to the drawings and specification on these issues should be withdrawn.

REMARKS

By this Amendment, claims 12 and 15, the specification, and certain drawings are revised to place this application in condition for allowance. Currently, claims 2, 5, 6 and 9-13, and 15 are before the Examiner for consideration on their merits, and claims 3, 4, 7, 8, and 14 have been withdrawn from consideration. While certain claims are withdrawn from consideration, Applicants again make their plea below that claim 15 is generic and that the restriction requirement should be withdrawn.

First, the objections made to the specification on page 7 of the Office Action have been addressed via amendments to the specification. With these changes, these objections should be withdrawn.

Second, the Examiner has raised a number of issues in the Office Action, and they are addressed below under their respective headings.

LACK OF ANTECEDENT BASIS IN THE SPECIFICATION FOR CLAIM LANGUAGE

The Examiner contends that the language regarding the central core working in shear for transmission of power from one support to the other and the language that one of the supports are driven and the decoupling element is adapted to transmit power does not have antecedent basis in the specification. Applicants respectfully disagree with this position. The specification on page 2, lines 19-32, teaches that the central core works in shear so there is clear support for this language.

Also, the first paragraph of the specification describes the invention in terms of a decoupling element for a power transmission system such as an alternator, compressor, etc. Figures 4a and 4b show the decoupling element as part of a drive device wherein the hub 3 drives the shaft 50 of an alternator. It is clear from this description that the ring 4 and hub are the two supports, and that the ring 4 is driven, the power transmitted to the driven ring being transmitted to the hub 3 via the decoupling element. Therefore, there is clear antecedent basis for saying that one of the supports is driven, that the decoupling element transmits power, and that the central core of the decoupling element works in shear as part of the transmission of power. Accordingly, the objection to this claim language should be withdrawn.

CLAIM 15 FORMAT

In response to the Examiner's insistence on providing indentation in claim 15, this claim has been amended and the objection in this regard should be withdrawn.

WRITTEN DESCRIPTION AND ENABLEMENT

In the Office Action, the Examiner takes issue with the added phrase of claim 15 arguing that there is no support for such language. The Examiner also contends that the specification lacks enablement. To support the enablement rejection, the Examiner contends as a first point that the specification has numerous errors in it. In a second point, the Examiner observes that the decoupling element projections could be compressed if not aligned with the recesses in the hub and ring, and therefore would be no longer present.

It is submitted that the claim language is supported by the description, and that the claims are fully enabled. First, the claim language in question means that the decoupling element has its shape regardless of whether it engages the two supports, i.e., the hub and ring. This is fully supported by the drawings of the invention, see for example, Figures 3 and 6. The decoupling element depicted in these figures has its shape in a free state. This depiction alone means that Applicants are entitled to claim this feature of the invention and not violate the written description requirement of 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph. As the Examiner knows, the drawings are part of the original disclosure, and therefore, Figures 3 and 6 can be relied upon to support the claim language at issue.

It is also contended that the claims are fully enabled. The question of enablement is different than written description, and requires that the specification contain sufficient teaching regarding the subject matter of the claims as to enable one of skill in the art to make and use the claimed invention. The mere fact that the PTO made errors in scanning the application or that the application had typographical errors does not by itself mean that the specification is fatally defective. In fact, the mere identification of the existence of errors is an insufficient basis to allege that the claims violate the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph. If this position is

maintained, the Examiner is requested to specifically identify the errors that make the specification non-enabling.

Secondly, the example given on page 6, paragraph 12 of the Office Action is also insufficient to support an enablement rejection. What the Examiner has done is to speculate on a use of the decoupling element and then use this speculation to allege that the speculated situation conflicts with the claim language. This approach is also insufficient to support a rejection based on a lack of enablement.

The real issue from an enablement standpoint is whether the specification teaches one of skill in the art how to make and use the invention. The language in question merely states that the decoupling element has its claimed abrupt projection, whether in a free state or in a state coupled with the two support elements. The specification clearly shows the decoupling element in its free state, see Figure 3. This specification also teaches the materials to make the ring, see page 2, lines 24 25, and how to make the ring, see page 4, lines 8-11. The specification also clearly teaches that the decoupling element can be used with the hub and ring to drive an alternator. Therefore, there is no lack of enablement in how the decoupling element is made or used, and the rejection in this regard is flawed and should be withdrawn.

If anything, the Examiner's intent may be to make a rejection based on claim indefiniteness in that the claim is unclear. However, it is contended that one of skill in the art when viewing the specification would clearly understand the meaning of the phrase in question, and that the claim is in full compliance with 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. Again, Applicants are merely claiming that the abrupt projections of the decoupling elements exist whether the decoupling element is used to link the two supports or in a free state.

PRIOR ART REJECTION

While the previous rejection of the claims has been withdrawn, the Examiner makes a new rejection, relying on GB 245,847 (GB) to allege that the claims are anticipated.

Applicants contend that GB does not establish a prima facie case of anticipation against claim 15 and the rejection must be withdrawn.

GB is cumulative to the prior art discussed in the background section of the specification. GB shows a decoupling element 3 which has projections which undulate along the elements' outer and inner edge surfaces, the projections being convex and separated by a concave section. This is the very configuration identified in the background art section, see page 2, lines 9-16, and characterized by convex and concave shapes. As detailed in this section, these type of a decoupling elements do not require the bonding that other prior art elements require. However, they have their other deficiencies. As explained on page 2, these types of decoupling elements allows slip over a certain torque, with a return to the driving configuration occurring when the torque falls below the cutoff point. However, this arrangement also results in a non-linearity in the exertion of torque, which leads to non-linear stiffness and harm to the filtering function.

The present invention overcomes this problem by providing the decoupling element with the abrupt projections on its faces. As explained on pages 2 and 3 of the specification, at least one of the faces on the decoupling element and the facing face of the support present complementary abrupt projections suitable for meshing together. This meshing of the ring creates zones at the roots of the projections where the central core substantially works in shear, these zones being regularly distributed over at least one of the faces of the ring. The central core extends from the protuberance-free continuous annular portion of the ring.

Under such conditions, the work of the ring is performed by reducing the radial component of the compression which would otherwise become preponderant with increasing angular offset. A linear relationship between torque and offset is then ensured, which leads to constant stiffness over a large angular range, for example a range greater than ±9°, and thus to a narrow resonant band.

Thus, the use of the abrupt projections as described above provides a significant advance in this art, such an advance not contemplated by GB. In fact, since GB has the

same configuration as the prior art discussed above, it suffers from the same deficiencies.

It is contended that GB does not anticipate claim 15 for the reason that GB does not disclosure the arrangement of the two support members and decoupling element with the decoupling element having the abrupt protections and the resultant creation of shear in the central zone as recited in claim 1.

In the rejection, the Examiner alleges that the concave and convex surfaces of the decoupling element of GB are the same as the claimed abrupt projections, and therefore GB teaches all of the claimed elements. This position is believed to be in error for two reasons.

First, Applicants contend that the undulating surfaces of the decoupling element of GB do not meet the limitations of claim 15. In review, claim 15 defines faces on the decoupling element with one face having an abrupt projection designed to mesh with the abrupt projection on a face of one of the supports. GB cannot be said to have a decoupling element with a face, the face having an abrupt projection. The Examiner's position that the transition of the concave outer surface portion of the decoupling element of GB to a convex surface portion as "abrupt" is an unreasonable interpretation of the claim language. While the Examiner is entitled to give the claims their broadest reasonable interpretation, this interpretation must be consistent with that which would be reached by those skilled in the art. It is respectfully asserted that one of skill in the art would not interpret a face having an "abrupt" projection to be the same as a concave face that smoothly transitions to a convex projection. Put another way, GB does not teach a decoupling element with the claimed face and abrupt projection, and the rejection based on 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) must be withdrawn.

Secondly, the decoupling element, its face and its abrupt projection are also described in claim 1 in terms of the zones in the central core at the root of the projections wherein the central core works in shear during transmission of power. The Examiner does not even address this claim limitation in the rejection, and the failure to do so taints the rejection and mandates its withdrawal. If a further rejection is made, the Examiner is called upon to address this claim limitation.

Even if the Examiner were to allege that the zones and central core were inherent in GB, such an allegation is effectively rebutted by the specification. The specification shows that the invention results in the central core working in shear as a result of the abrupt projections, thereby resulting in a constant stiffness over a large angular range, see page 3, lines 5-16, and page 6, lines 17-32. This result solves the non-linear stiffness attributed to the decoupling elements of the prior art, i.e., those with the concave/convex shape. The specification indicates that the working in shear of the central core would not be found in the prior art systems that use a decoupling element of concave and convex shape. Since GB uses such a shape as part of its decoupling element, Applicants assert that the specification shows that the claim limitations at issue are not inherent in GB.

In an inherency position, the Examiner would have to say that the prior art achieves the same results as the invention, but the specification says otherwise and this explanation is sufficient to show that an inherency position is flawed and could not be sustained on appeal.

The arguments above demonstrate that GB cannot establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness against claim 15. Moreover, there is no basis to contend that GB could somehow be modified so that the Examiner could allege obviousness. There is absolutely no suggestion in GB to change the shape of the decoupling element to include abrupt projections. Moreover, GB does not even recognize the problem faced by the inventors let alone the inventive solution. Any contention that GB obviates the invention can only be the hindsight reconstruction of the prior art in light of Applicants' disclosure.

RESTRICTION REQUIREMENT

Lastly, it is contended that claim 15 is a generic claim and that Applicants are entitled to a consideration of a reasonable number of species. Therefore, the restriction requirement as applied to claims 3, 4, 7, 8, and 14 should be withdrawn, and these claims should be allowed as claims dependent from claim 15.

SUMMARY

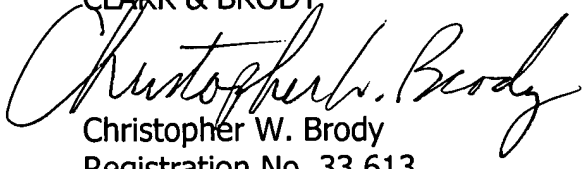
In summary, it is respectfully contended that each and every issue raised in the outstanding Office Action has been addressed herein. Thus, all claims are fully enabled and described under the purview of 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, the drawings and specification are in order, and the claims are neither anticipated nor rendered obvious by GB.

Accordingly, the Examiner is requested to examine this application in light of this response and pass claims 2-15 onto issuance. If the Examiner believes that an interview with Applicants attorney would be helpful in expediting the allowance of this application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned at 202-835-1753.

The above constitutes a complete response to all issues raised in the Office Action dated January 13, 2006. Again, reconsideration and allowance of this application is respectfully requested.

Please charge any fee deficiency or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-1088.

Respectfully submitted,
CLARK & BRODY



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Docket No.: 11016-0024
Date: March 31, 2006

Attachment - Letter to the Official Draftsperson w/(2) sheets of Corrected Drawings